



PRESS RELEASE

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Cahill Fails to Explain Stance on PLAs

Timothy Cahill, candidate for governor and State Treasurer, has failed to respond to the Merit Construction Alliance's request that he state his position on the use of Project Labor Agreements on public construction projects.

"PLAs on public projects amount to state endorsed employment discrimination against the majority of construction workers in Massachusetts, who happen to be open shop. Why should construction workers pay taxes to fund projects that they are not allowed to work on?" said Ronald N. Cogliano, President and CEO of the Merit Construction Alliance of Kingston, Mass.

An April 12 letter from Cogliano to Cahill asked:

"I write today to ask you to provide the Merit Construction Alliance, which represents open shop contractors and employees across Massachusetts, with your position on whether the Commonwealth should adopt PLAs on state-funded projects. If elected governor, would your administration ever seek to use PLAs or would you sign legislation containing a PLA?"

A March 24th Boston Globe column reported gubernatorial candidate Charlie Baker opposes the use of PLAs, while Governor Deval Patrick supports them. As for Cahill, columnist Scot Lehigh reported: "Independent candidate Tim Cahill's campaign couldn't provide his position by deadline."

Background on PLAs:

- PLAs are deals between an owner (usually the state or a local government) and labor unions that require the use of only union labor on construction projects, therefore barring non-union construction workers from competing and working. In return for this exclusivity, unions promise not to picket or cause other disruptions on the project.
- In Massachusetts, about 80 percent of construction workers are open shop, while 20 percent are union, according to federal labor statistics reported by the researchers at www.unionstats.com. This means that PLAs eliminate competition from the vast majority of the construction market, providing unions with a virtual monopoly on taxpayer-funded projects, leading to significant increases in project costs.
- PLAs inflate construction costs by 12 to 18 percent, according to the Beacon Hill Institute.
- Not having a PLA means that all qualified bidders, union and non-union alike, are placed on an equal footing and therefore can submit competitive bids for a project.
- Reform #1 of The Baker's Dozen says "Public construction projects should be open to all bidders."
- In a March 11 speech, Patrick said: *"I have directed that, going forward, Project Labor Agreements be used when necessary. As a start, we're going to use a PLA on the new \$150 million science facility and other capital improvements at the UMass Boston campus. We're looking into other projects across the Commonwealth where a PLA is appropriate. Candidates include the Salem State College Library, the Lowell Courthouse project, and the UMass Amherst academic building."*
- A Suffolk University/7News poll found 69% of likely Massachusetts voters opposed the use of requirements to hire only from union halls on state projects.

The Merit Construction Alliance is a statewide non-profit trade association representing the open shop construction industry. The MCA advocates for fair and open competition in the public and private construction markets and believes the awarding of construction contracts should be based solely on merit, applying criteria such as quality, value, budget, schedule and safety.